

**STRENGTHENING POLICY
TOOLS TO ACHIEVE
INTEGRATED COASTAL
MANAGEMENT**

*September 2001- March 2004
Final Report*



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In order to improve the current Mexican legal framework, it is urgent to raise awareness among the region's stakeholders and decision makers on employing land and resource use planning tools for improved coastal zone management.

This project aims to improve the capacity of local and federal authorities responsible for enforcement and to better manage OET implementation and compliance, with a focus on the tourism sector. Additionally, the project seeks the participation of the WWF and collaborators in the legislative process to hopefully create two new federal laws, a Coastal Law and a Protected Areas Law. These laws would make marine resource use planning a stronger tool and ensure the incorporation of integrated coastal management principles into planning processes.

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ACRONYMS

AMTAVE	Mexican Association of Adventure Tourism
ASK	Amigos de Sian Ka'an, A.C.
AHRM	Riviera Maya Hotel Association
BCS	Baja California Sur
CANAIPESCA	Camara Nacional de la Industria Pesquera
CCCEP	Mexico Conservation of Critical Coastal Ecosystems Project
CSGC	Coalition for the Sustainability of the Gulf of California
CI	Conservation International
ECOSUR	Colegio de la Frontera Sur – College of the Southern Border
FONATUR	National Fund for Tourism Development
GOC	Gulf of California
ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
INE	Instituto Nacional de Ecología – National Ecology Institute of Mexico
MAR	Mesoamerican Reef
MIA	Manifiestación de Impacto Ambiental
MIRC	Manejo Integrado de Recursos Costeros – Integrated Coastal Management
OET	Ordenamiento Estatal Territorial
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NGO	Non-government organization or civil associations
NOM	Norma Oficial Mexicana

OET	Ordenamiento Ecológico Territorial – Ecological Zoning Ordinance
PROFEPA	Procuraduría Federal de protección al Ambiente
QR	Quintana Roo
Red-MIRC	Red de Manejo Integrado de Recursos Costeros – Network of Integrated Coastal Management
SAGARPA	Secretaría de Agricultura Ganadería y Pesca
SEDETUR	Secretaría de Turismo
SEMARNAT	Secretaria de Medio Ambiente Recursos Naturales Areas Protejidas – Environmental Secretariat of Mexico
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UQROO	University of Quintana Roo
USAID/G/ENV	US Agency for International Development – Global Environment Center
USAID/Mexico	US Agency for International Development – Mexico Program
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature
ZOFEMAT	Zona Marítima Federal Terrestre – Federal Maritime Zone Program

HIGHLIGHTS:

The past two years have been very active in terms of environmental policy reform proposals; however, the processes have been time-consuming and in most cases their establishment has encountered harsh opposition from various sectors. In addition, the Ministry of the Environment is now undergoing an organizational restructuring, which has resulted in the removal of the minister and other cabinet members and has caused further delay in the ongoing environmental initiatives on the political agenda.

As a result of the adaptive management, WWF has in some cases changed its approach in looking for more efficient policy reforms that could result in significant advances in the context of national conservation efforts. The following report presents a summary of the final project results in terms of national policy and ecoregional work in the Mesoamerican Reef and the Gulf of California (see the attached CD for extensive documentation).

This report reflects the work done by WWF Mexico and its consultants during the project entitled “STRENGTHENING POLICY TOOLS TO ACHIEVE INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT”. As is important for every project related to environmental policy, this project included direct WWF action and collaboration with numerous partners including the Coalition for the Sustainability of the Gulf of California (CSGC), Conservation International (CI), the Network of Universities of Mexico’s Northwest (UAS, UNISON, UABC and UABCS) and of the Mesoamerican Reef, Amigos de Sian Ka’an (ASK), the staff of the Coastal Protected Areas, the Mexican Association of Adventure Tourism (AMTAVE, and since March 2003 the Riviera Maya Hotel Association (AHRM).

Gulf of California



Quintana Roo

HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS

National Policy Tools

- *Analysis and review of the Coastal Management Law (Ley de Manejo Costero) proposed by SEMARNAT.*
- *Review of Costa Maya OETs*
- *Participation and collaboration in the public consultation process of the OET for the Sea of Cortes (Gulf of California).*
- *Prepared NOM proposal for shrimp aquaculture for presentation to the Federal authorities*

Mesoamerican Reef

- ✓ *Creation, operation, and follow-up of environmental watchdogs (guardias ambientales).*
- ✓ *Sian Ka'an OET published in State of Q.R. Register.*
- ✓ *Environmental watchdogs (guardias ambientales) operating and follow-up.*
- ✓ *MOU between WWF and AMTAVE.*
- ✓ *MOU between WWF and SEDETUR (Quintana Roo, Tourism Agency).*
- ✓ *MOU between WWF and AHRM.*
- ✓ *Ecotourism product design (e.g. whale shark, watching, bird watching) with AMTAVE, federal and local authorities (Whale Shark watching).*
- ✓ *Alternative Tourism Committee for Quintana Roo created and operating.*

Gulf of California

- ✓ *Environmental Advisory Committee (Packard, COBI, TNC, FMCN, CI, WWF, PRONATURA) created and operating.*
- ✓ *MIA regional due to the Nautical Route project required by law applied for the first time in Mexico.*
- ✓ *The results of the Biodiversity Vision Workshop developed by the CSGC in the Gulf of California were adopted by the National Ecology Institute (part of the Ministry of the Environment) and are to be included in the technical proposal of the OET for the Sea of Cortez.*
- ✓ *The historical consideration of a preliminary consultation with the conservation sector, prior to the OET public consultations process.*
- ✓ *About five million hectares placed under protection policies and seven million hectares under conservation policies were included in the technical proposal OET of the Sea of Cortez.*
- ✓ *Supported SEMARNAT during the public consultation process of the OET for the Gulf of California by inviting key regional stakeholders to participate in the process and in the public forums convoked by SEMARNAT*
- ✓ *Socialization and endorsement of the Gulf of California OET model (Land and Marine Use Plan)*
- ✓ *Design of the watchdog surveillance program for the Gulf of California*
- ✓ *GIS system defined in the watchdog surveillance program*

Mexico's environmental agenda is focused on the over-harvesting of natural resources that is caused by the absence of an ecological culture, the necessities of regional and local communities, the public policies and markets promoting unsustainable and non-diverse productive activities, and a very limited capacity to set boundaries to restrict access to natural resources. Since 1982 Mexican environmental policy has shifted to a new strategy for environmental protection including the implementation of ecological planning tools such as the following: sector-specific programs, regional sustainable development programs, ecological land and marine zoning plans, environmental impact assessments, the enforcement of environmental law, and ecological taxes.

Furthermore, large numbers of conservationist organizations and governmental agencies are focusing their efforts on the protection of national ecosystems and on ensuring the well-being of local communities dependant on them. They have worked together to preserve the Mexican richness and to develop effective planning tools in order to set a long term sustainable vision for the administration of natural resources.

The lack of management policies up to this point is not seen as a handicap; on the contrary, it offers a unique opportunity to build new bridges and innovative approaches for the use and protection of natural resources, which is essential to ensure the future and improve the quality of life for a growing national population. Even though the number of established protected areas (PA) is increasing, the main challenges of conservation are not met only by the PA decrees, which in some cases could be identified as merely paper parks, but in the promotion of participatory decision making processes with multi-sector representation. In light of this approach, WWF identifies Land Use Plans as effective public policy instruments to orient the projects and activities within the coastal area in a sustainable manner.



Gulf of California: One of the major concerns of the conservation sector regarding the development of the Gulf of California OET is the Nautical Ladder (*Escalera Náutica*), a mega-development project proposed by the federal government through the National Fund for Tourism Development (FONATUR). WWF and its partners strongly believe that the Nautical Ladder has the potential to negatively affect the biodiversity of the region, therefore they set the objective of establishing appropriate protection and conservation policies as a strategy to deal with this development. The Coalition for the Sustainability of the Gulf of California (CSGC) defined its position concerning conservation priorities for the Gulf of California at a workshop held in Mazatlán, Mexico, in May 2001.

The Nautical Ladder project is a two-phase initiative whose objective is the establishment of 22 full-service marinas on both sides of the Baja California coast and the mainland in the Sea of Cortez. It also calls for an 84-mile highway for towing boats from the Pacific side of the Baja Peninsula to the Gulf, thus eliminating the need to sail all the way around the Cape. In order to facilitate travel among this chain of marinas, it includes improvement of the road between Mexicali and San Felipe and renovations to ten existing airports and ten airstrips. The ultimate goal of the Nautical Ladder project is to increase U.S. boaters in the region and to help build infrastructure and provide jobs for the people of Baja California.

On the other hand, the current Mexican environmental law requires that the research needed to develop a Ordenamiento Ecológico Territorial (OET) is the responsibility of the Dirección General de Investigación de Ordenamiento Ecológico y Conservación de los Ecosistemas, which is part of the Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE) under the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT). Furthermore, the implementation of the OETs is within the realm of the Subsecretaría de Política Ambiental y Vinculación Sectorial of SEMARNAT and included the participation of Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (PROFEPA) and the Dirección General de la Zona Federal Marítimo Terrestre (ZOFEMAT). The lobbying process includes the promotion, participation, and incorporation of the different stakeholders in the planning process of the OET. This lobbying can be described as the technical, legal, and management actions aimed at building consensus among the three different government levels, the private sector, and civil society for the planning, zoning and economic activity that affects natural resources. By law, the OET assessment must be completed prior to the implementation of the Nautical Ladder project in order to prevent and minimize environmental effects in the region.

Mesoamerican Reef: Costa Maya, the focus area, lies in the southern part of the state of Quintana Roo along the Mexican Caribbean. It is one of WWF's highest international priorities for conservation and is threatened by rapidly expanding interest on the part of multinational developers. These powerful organizations catalyze rapid development and make it difficult to exercise local control. The experiences of the Riviera Maya—the Cancun-Tulum Corridor—indicate that in order to accomplish conservation objectives in Costa Maya, it is necessary to be able to enforce compliance with existing conservation regulations. In Mexico, the legal tool driving development on a sustainable basis is the “Ecological

Territorial Ordinance” (ETO); however, as in the case of the Riviera Maya, the ETO is still a tool that needs to be strengthened. Contributing to this problem is both a lack of enforcement and a weak interest in complying with legal tools. These factors are compounded in some cases by corruption.

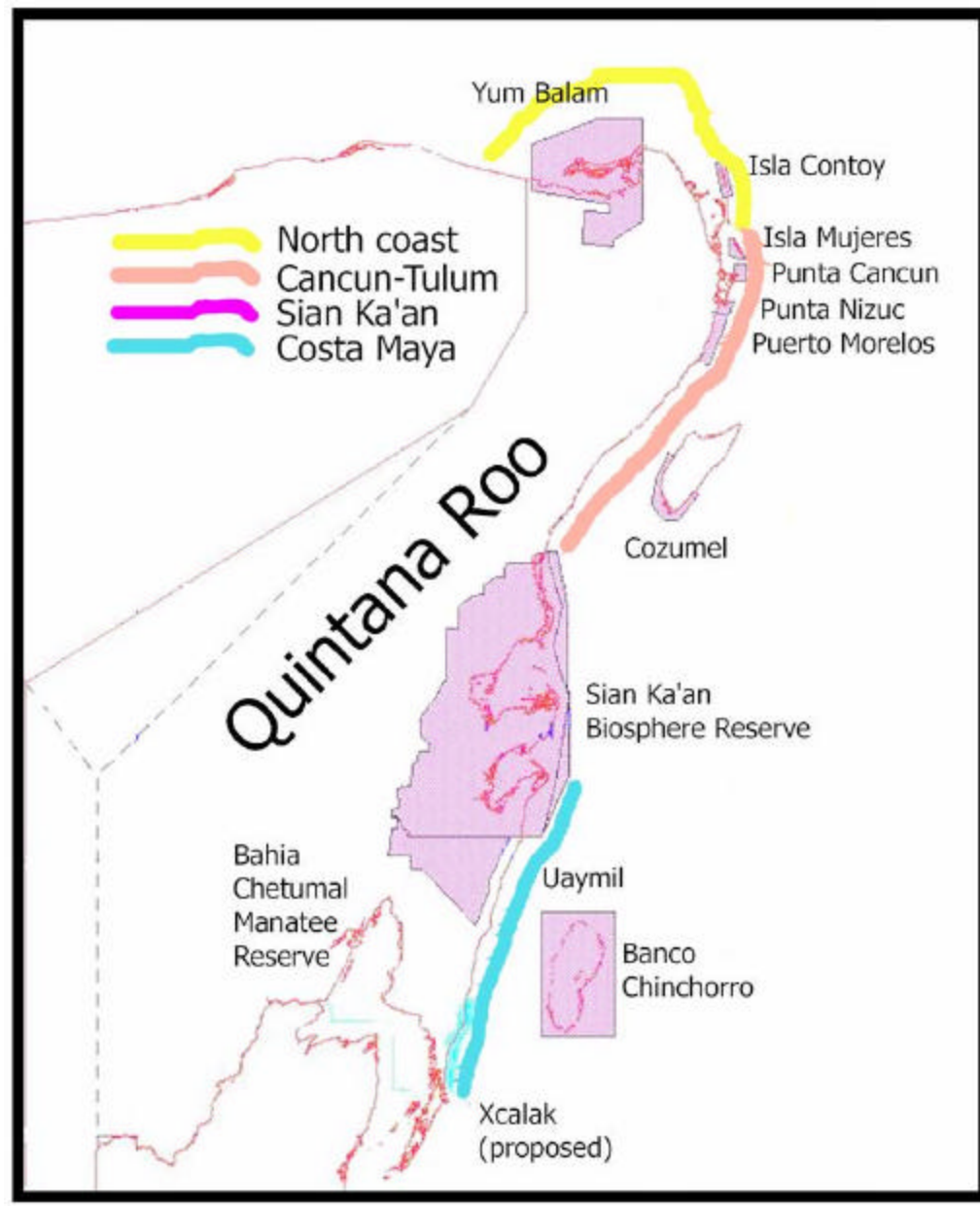
It is also important to consider how the development of Costa Maya influences other areas along the coast and protected areas such as Banco Chinchorro Biosphere Reserve and Xcalak Reefs National Park. The development of Costa Maya will increase infrastructure and numbers of visitors to the area, leading to high demand for local resources and the transformation of the landscape. Never before had there been so much new infrastructural development in this ecoregion in so little time as there is now in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo. Damage to the fragile reef ecology from increased sewage, garbage, and bilge dumping; toxic spills; draining of mangroves; reckless navigation; careless anchoring on the corals; over-fishing; and illegal extraction of reef creatures for souvenirs and aquariums are common and are expected to increase with increased tourism to the area. The most extreme example of this development is Cancun, just north of the Costa Maya. This mass tourism mecca grew from a population of nearly zero in the 1970’s to its current status as the largest city in the state. The Cancun development strategy depends on mass volume, low quality, low cost, and quick turnover tourism, largely catering to young, lower-middle income Americans. South of the Cancun-Tulum Corridor, buffered by the Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve, lies the Costa Maya—WWF’s area of focus. Protection of the Costa Maya is vital to conservation of the Mesoamerican Reef (MAR).

Although the Costa Maya’s Ecological Territorial Ordinance has been technically defined, economic interests have thus far prevented its implementation, thereby threatening the area with a destiny similar to that of the Cancun-Tulum Corridor. WWF will continue to push for implementation of a rigorous ETO for the Costa Maya. If successful, this would mobilize urgently needed controls on the tourism market. WWF has taken several important steps needed to influence the ETO process.

The long-term goal of this project is to conserve the resources and ensure sustainable development in the Costa Maya. Our conservation strategy involves using both push (and control) factors to detain harmful coastal tourism development and over-fishing, and pull (or incentive) factors to mobilize producer and consumer demand for sustainable fisheries and eco-tourism in the Costa Maya. The Costa Maya’s most critical protected areas need to be consolidated as vital places of refuge for species and ecosystems currently threatened by over-fishing and destructive tourism.



Poster showing the first meeting of the Gulf Coalition.



FINAL RESULTS

OBJECTIVE 1: USE EXPERIENCE OF EXISTING OETs TO INFORM FUTURE PROCESSES.

The project targeted two areas: the Mesoamerican Reef and The Gulf of California.

A. Mesoamerican reef

LOOKING BACK

Planned Activities

- Consultant will carry out an analysis of the current status of 3/5 OET that are in use or in development along the coasts in the Mexican Caribbean.
- Organize regionally focused workshops for targeted audiences to share results from analysis. To get consensus and input from stakeholders.
- Work with Sian Ka'an Reserve Director to facilitate a successful OET for the biosphere reserve.

Outcomes

- OET analysis for the Costa Maya, which can be used to inform OET processes throughout Mexico.
- Recommendations on improved use of OETs in the Costa Maya
- Recommendations to build capacity for effective OET implementation, along with ways to incorporate an adaptive and transparent process for correcting weaknesses or gaps in the instrument and its application.

Strategies Used

The WWF has been supporting and participating in various processes aimed at the creation of awareness and consensus building among the different stakeholders that play an important role in the use of the coastal resources of Quintana Roo. These activities have been supported by quality information and analyses generated through consultancies commissioned by the WWF.

Final Results

- Sian Ka'an OET published after a successful participatory process.
- Comparative analysis of Costa Maya, Nichupte Lagoon and Cancun Tulum Corridor (Riviera Maya) finished and sent to different stakeholders for analysis.
- Technical input to the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve and Xcalak National Park Directors to facilitate OET implementation
- Joint report (April 2003) on OET activities

LOOKING AHEAD

Challenges/Constraints/Observations

The momentum and interest of the various stakeholders in the OET have been maintained as a result of past activities, the interest of Municipal and State authorities, and the participation of organized groups such as the "Environmental Watchdogs".

Proposed Strategies

Close cooperation with the directors and staff of the MPAs and the integration of local stakeholders has been a successful strategy due to the fact that the processes and common visions on sustainability have been internalized by the communities, authorities, and members of academia. For the rest of the life of project, WWF will continue with these strategies.

The last workshops led by WWF were used to disseminate the technical information among the various stakeholders in order to apply the common strategy and goals of the implementation of the OETs as a truly participatory process.



B. Gulf of California

The Sea of Cortez Land Use Plan, which represents the highest level environmental planning tool in Mexico, has met strong opposition from the fisheries sector. The process that includes the results of the biodiversity vision and the signature agreement for its implementation among three government levels, have been delayed due to the strong pressure that CANAIPESCA (National Fishery Chamber) has put on SEMARNAT and state government authorities. Although the carefully completed analyses of previous OET processes in Mexico were presented to SEMARNAT, including several “lessons learned” to be applied in the Gulf, the experience was still a political failure.

From CANAIPESCA’s point of view, the regional OET is only an instrument that pretends to regulate all economic activities without taking into account the current uses and actions related to natural resources such as, fisheries, tourism and port services. The fisheries industry claims that all these vocations are not correctly incorporated in the evaluation of the OET process and had publicly encouraged state governors not to sign the coordination agreement in order to preserve the state sovereignty. One of the major concerns from the private sector is that once the OETs are implemented, it will be necessary to obtain the consensus of 5 state governments, 8 federal secretaries and go to the tribunals to reorient future economic

activities in the region. However, according to SEMARNAT, the OET now has an adaptive instrument that will review the viability and effectiveness of the implementation.

Currently, the instrument that was supposed to regulate regional activities, including the nautical project, is delayed, and SEMARNAT is evaluating the political options for its establishment. At the same time WWF decided to support two workshops through ISLA A.C., one in San Carlos, Nvo. Guaymas and the other in La Paz, BCS, for the R-EIA review and analysis. The document showed that there were serious deficiencies and irregularities in the R-EIA review process. In general terms, the document does not present a truly regional assessment because it is concerned only with the localized impacts of the construction and rebuilding of the marinas. All real estate transactions associated with the project did not take the environmental impact analysis into account, and it is only mentioned when the economic benefits are presented in some cases, the locations of the marinas were not even defined, thus making an accurate environmental impact evaluation impossible. These comments add to the fact that the document confounded major species groups (mammals with birds, reptiles with amphibians) and contained major mistakes on vegetation types such as oaks and native grassland in the desert.

With the results that were obtained, ALCOSTA decided to emit an official recommendation that heavily conditions the acceptance of the development of the project. These conditions include the following:

- The mega development must be implemented in phases.
- The first phase must include the rebuilding of existing marinas in the region.
- For the second phase, a technical committee must be formed to establish the criteria for the selection of the new marina locations.
- Mitigation activities must be included for synergic impact, especially on islands and MPAs.

LOOKING BACK

Planned Activities

- Analyze the current status of 3/5 OETs that are in use or in development along the coasts in the Mexican Caribbean and the Gulf of California.
- Organize regionally focused workshops for targeted audiences to share results of the analysis. Gain input from stakeholders (including SEMARNAT, PROFEPA, local authorities, key local stakeholders, and academic and NGO sectors)
- Support SEMARNAT for the OET Instrumentation Phase
- Conduct two regional workshops to support the public consultation and evaluation of the Nautical Route Regional Impact Assessment.

Outcomes

- Formal delivery of OET analysis to SEMARNAT – OET and Environmental Policy Direction.
- Coordination agreement Signed for OET instrumentation (on stand-by status due to political situation).
- Four regional workshops in the Gulf of California for OET
- Lessons learned and recommendations from OETs in Costa Maya included in final Gulf OET.
- Minutes and report of the Nautical Route RIA workshops.

Strategies Used

Since the beginning of the ELUP public consultation process, WWF supported SEMARNAT to attract the attention of private sector stakeholders and key from the conservation sector to participate in the OET public fora. The intention was to increase the participation from both within and outside of the environmental sector to guarantee a healthy process. However, this call to participate was misunderstood by some organisms like CANAIPESCA, which accused WWF of collusion with SEMARNAT authorities to turn the Gulf of California into a giant fish bowl. After analyzing this situation, WWF decided to support the public evaluation process of the Nautical Route RIA as an alternative.

Final Results

- OET analyses for the Gulf of California: 15 OETs including 13 local and 2 regional

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed OETs that require review:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State level Sinaloa, Sonora; Puerto Peñasco, Sonora; and Puerto San Carlos, BCS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical part of OET completed with the possibility of implementation :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northern Central Coast of Sinaloa
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OET Diagnostic completed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bahía de La Paz, and Golfo de California (Mar de Cortes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OET Decreed but not implemented:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estate of Baja California, Corredor Tijuana - Ensenada, San Felipe - Puertecitos, BC; La Bufadora - Pta Banda, BC; Corredor Los Cabos, BCS; and Municipal of Los Cabos, BCS

- Support to SEMARNAT during the public consultation process of the OET for the Gulf of California though parallel invitation of key regional stakeholders to participate in the process and in the public fora convened by SEMARNAT.
- Coastal Law analysis report presented to SEMARNAT authorities at the environmental policy department.
- Minutes, report and recommendations for the Regional Impact Assessment of the Nautical Route presented through ALCOSTA to the federal government in order to present a conservationist front position.

LOOKING AHEAD

Challenges/Constraints/Observations

The fisheries sector was able to create the idea among the general public and the Gulf state governments that the Ecological Marine and Land Use Plan would result in the total closure of the Gulf of California fisheries, and that it would result in huge job losses and economic problems at the regional level. As a result, the initiative has been stalled for the time being, but most likely will be fully reinitiated in the near future.

Proposed Strategies

WWF proposes to **work together with the fisheries industry** (CANAINPESCA) to develop a fisheries management plan (plan de ordenamiento pesquero) for the region. Informal preliminary talks with officials from SAGARPA suggest that there is the possibility of an agreement between WWF, CANAINPESCA and SAGARPA to jointly develop this management plan. Since WWF and its partners have a great deal of experience in participatory planning and its focus is on the long-term conservation of resources, this initiative provides an excellent opportunity to co-lead the process and lay the foundation for further collaboration in the application of the Land/Sea Land Use Planning (Ordenamiento Ecológico Costero y Marino).



OBJECTIVE 2: FACILITATE EFFECTIVE INCLUSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF OETs IN TWO REGIONS

A. Mesoamerican Reef

LOOKING BACK

Planned Activities

- A consultant will help facilitate the integration of environmental issues raised by the Committee for the Integrated Management of Costa Maya in the implementation of the Costa Maya OET.

Expected Outcomes

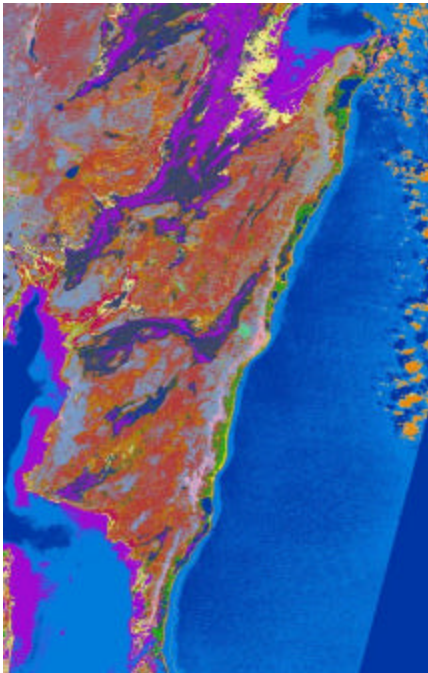
- Increased awareness among local and regional decision makers as well as federal agency representatives and the tourism sector regarding OETs as resource use planning tools.
- List of key recommendations and successes produced and disseminated.

Strategies Used

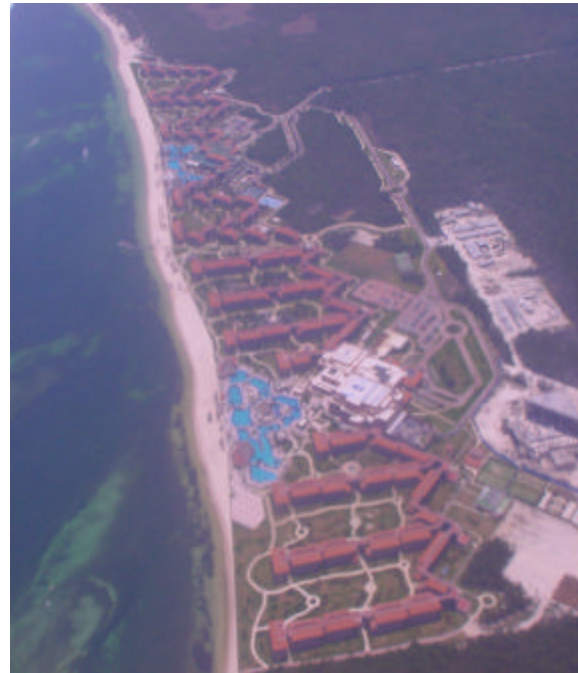
Close collaboration with SEMARNAT and local stakeholders in the creation of a Committee for the Environmental Watchdogs. Linkage of the Committee and the network of watchdogs to assist in the monitoring of the adequate implementation of the legal instruments.

Final Results

- Creation and operation of Environmental Watchdogs for the sustainable development of Costa Maya
- Second workshop on follow-up of enforcement of Costa Maya environmental law
- Key recommendations ready and in press
- Recording and follow-up of complaints and suits presented to PROFEPA
- Manual for Environmental Watchdogs finished and in press.



Xcalak Peninsula



Cancun Resort

LOOKING AHEAD

Challenges/Constraints/Observations

Environmental Watchdogs need to be supported and their activities monitored in order to develop a “fine tuning” of the actions. Activities need to be recorded in order to document the ‘lessons learned’ and to ensure the continued quality control of the implementation. As with any project of this kind, the motivation will decrease if the network does not see the results of their efforts and if the authorities do not enforce the law and punish the infractions.

Proposed Strategies

It is necessary that the ‘lessons learned,’ the impact of the principles that are promoted, and the successes are reported in order to create momentum and advocacy among the network. It is also of utmost importance to share the lessons with other areas in Quintana Roo. The results, records, and manuals will be published and uploaded to the website that is being developed.

B. Gulf of California

LOOKING BACK

On June 8 2002, the results of the Biodiversity Conservation Vision workshop, held in Mazatlan and organized by WWF and partners, were included in a legal instrument and were adopted by the National Ecology Institute to be included in the technical proposal of the Ecological Land Use Plan of the Sea of Cortes OET. The first practical application of this instrument was the threat/opportunity presented by the mega development project proposed by FONATUR called the Nautical Route. Although the scale of the Ecological Land Use Plan makes it inappropriate to evaluate the impacts of the Nautical Route as originally projected, the plan was considered a powerful legal instrument, because during its second phase included a short window approach in 8 of the 22 selected sites for marina developments, analyzing the different level of impact from each one of the uses. However after the failure in the OET process, the regulation and the policies included in it are undefined and in a stand-by status.

The position presented to the federal government included two of four environmental policies:

- a) Protection: focused on the preservation of biodiversity, critical habitats and ecological processes and the future establishment of MPA's, no take zones, refuges, etc.; and
- b) Conservation:-directed at the sustainable use of natural resources in selected areas.

This action represented a great advance in terms of environmental policy tools for the protection of the Gulf of California, because land use plans are the instruments required by law to regulate the harmonization and sustainability of productive activities in the region, including those directed for the conservation of natural resources. In summary, the *Ecological Land Use Plan of the Sea of Cortes* included a total of 4 million hectares to be preserved under protection policies and 7 million hectares under conservation policies. This means that around 40% of the Gulf is under some scheme of protection and sustainable use.

To reinforce the official regulations in the Gulf, WWF designed a watchdog surveillance program called “white guards or watchdogs” that oversee the correct application of the environmental regulations

determined in the Ecological Land Use Plan of the Sea of Cortez and the RIA. Currently, the complete internet platform is ready to be launched after conducting 4 regional training workshops related to the system to be implemented.

Planned Activities

- Collaborate with SEMARNAT and INE to ensure incorporation of conservation priorities for biodiversity in the Gulf of California in the planning process.
- Four regional watchdog groups created in the Gulf of California with the participation of the NW Mexico alliance, the Gulf of California Coalition and the academic sector in order to support the PROFEPA law enforcement activities (see also Objective 3).

Outcomes

- Official declaration of the OET model (on stand-by status due to political considerations).
- Ecological strategies available as regulations criteria for the MOET
- GIS system established for the watchdogs surveillance program (See also objective 3).
- Information available (See also objective 3).
- Workshop minutes reported and 4 regional groups trained in the use of the watchdog program (see also Objective 3).

Strategies Used

The basic strategy included setting the conservation priorities of the OET of the Sea of Cortes, which have a solid scientific support of the priorities portfolio, plus the support of a large number of well known institutions and experts. This, together with the close relationship with the National Ecology Institute of SEMARNAT, set the basis to include the priorities portfolio and to embrace environmental considerations during regulatory activities for future regional development.

Final Results

1. 4 million hectares to be preserved under protection policies and 7 million hectares under conservation policies. This means around 40% of the Gulf is under some scheme of protection and sustainable use.
2. Socialization and endorsement of the Gulf of California OET model promoted (Land and Marine Use Plan)
3. Decision making support system (look before you buy) for environmental watchdogs designed, including protocols and procedures. This includes the Mesoamerican Reef as well.
4. Compilation and management of databases and available information for watchdogs program including:
 - MEXICAN OFFICIAL GAZETTE INFORMATION
 - NAUTICAL ROUTE DOCUMENTS
 - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESTMENT
 - REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESMENT
 - MEXICAN OFFICAL REGULATIONS
 - STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS
 - STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS
 - STATE AND MUNICIPAL MANAGMENT PLANS
 - SEA OF CORTES LAND USE PLAN

5. Two information sessions related to the watchdog surveillance program for regional groups (ISLA, A.C. and TNC Baja California Sur)

LOOKING AHEAD

Challenges/Constraints/Observations

Major constraints for this objective are related to the effective regulation of the Nautical Route project, since the OET, which was originally the legal instrument required by law to deal with it, is now delayed. Conservation organizations must look for new and innovative alternatives for the sustainable implementation of the project and must draw the interest and attention of the federal government to the urgent need to establish accurate policy instruments to protect the Gulf of California environment and the local community's livelihood.

Proposed Strategies

To demonstrate the scientific support of the OET policies, WWF is now ready to release the Technical memorandum of the mega development workshop. The document is now in its final stage and is being reviewed by all thematic leaders who participated in the process. Another important strategy will be the development of a communication campaign to promote the *watchdog surveillance system* and to encourage civil society participation (see next objective).

OBJECTIVE 3: COMMUNICATION OF THE RESULTS TO IMPACT INDIVIDUAL AND POLITICAL DECISION MAKING TO CONSIDER CONSERVATION PRIORITIES AND THE OUTCOME OF OET PROCESSES

A. Mesoamerican reef

LOOKING BACK

Planned Activities

- Hire a consultant to develop a pilot web page to disseminate information on the State of Quintana Roo OET, specifically to disseminate information to facilitate compliance to the regulation, this activity was carried out largely by the WWF Gulf of California experts.
- Participation in the elaboration of key national level policy tools aimed at coastal resources. Examples include: Federal Coastal Law, Federal Protected Areas Law, General Law for OETs

Outcomes

- Communication campaign strategy established.
- Legislative process enriched for federal laws regarding coastal and marine management.
- Decision making system for Environmental Watchdogs and potential user/investors (Look Before you Buy)

Strategies Used

Website design, development, and maintenance.

Final Results

Website with information in the process of being launched

LOOKING AHEAD

Challenges/Constraints/Observations

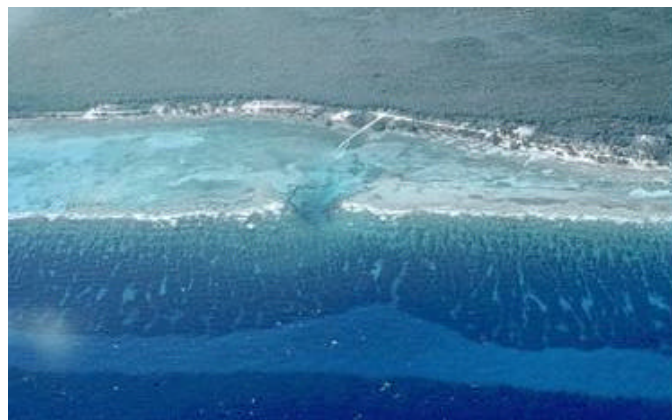
A communication strategy is of paramount importance to make sure that the tools are disseminated and socialized and used properly. If the information does not reach the potential users, the implementation will be difficult.

Proposed Strategies

Development of bilingual website with the necessary information and links.

Booklets with information.

Media campaign to advertise the site and its utility and convenience.



Costa Maya

B. Gulf of California

LOOKING BACK

Communication and advocacy are key elements in the implementation of successful strategies in order to thrust the conservationist political agenda to the national level. In the past, the government and conservationists have employed media and public opinion to exert pressure in order to achieve their goals. The work done in previous years under this objective was thus related to the development of communication and advocacy elements in order to improve the current legal environmental framework. This was achieved through participation in the elaboration of key policy tools, and by actively contributing to the regional public participation process for the establishment of new regulations. Moreover, it has been equally important to encourage the involvement of key sectors and civil society in the decision making processes at the regional level.

Having this approach in mind, WWF focused on the following two substantial issues:

- The adequate elaboration and presentation to the government of the Mexican Norm to regulate shrimp aquaculture. (Note that other interventions in national policy are mentioned in Objectives 1 and 2).

Two years ago SAGARPA expressed its intention to regulate shrimp aquaculture in national territory. The proposal was considered to have been released without a previous consensus process that should have included the views of different sectors and community representatives. Since shrimp aquaculture is a growing trend in the ecoregion that could significantly impact future development, WWF decided to provide support to the University of Sonora to review and modify the shrimp aquaculture Norm proposal prior to its approval.

As a result, a new Norm proposal that has been accepted by the stakeholders involved in the aquaculture shrimp industry as well as a “Best Practices” manual have been developed by the University of Sonora.

- The development of communication activities to promote public awareness regarding the release of the *watchdog surveillance program* as a means to promote public participation in the sustainable and correct development of the Nautical Route project.

The technical development of the *watchdog surveillance program* (see *Objective 2*) is now complete. WWF, with the participation of PROFEPA authorities, has prepared a regional official presentation of the project to announce its release and to encourage members of civil society to participate in it.

The actions and advances mentioned in this objective are based on the communication activities required for the promotion of the watchdog surveillance program mentioned in Objective 2, and the need for communication elements to advocate key policy tools at the national level.

Planned Activities

- Participation in the elaboration of key national level policy tools aimed at coastal resources. Examples include: Mexican official norms.
- Website to publicize the information related to the Gulf of California, specifically to distribute information to facilitate compliance with current regulations (see Objective 2)

Outcomes

- Gulf bilingual website operating
- GIS system established for the watchdog surveillance program.
- Aquaculture shrimp NOM proposal formally presented to SEMARNAT authorities
- Advocacy activities that are carried out will be reported (although the official release of a Mexican NOM is subjected to government willing and timing)
- Marinas NOM proposal officially presented to SEMARNAT authorities.

Final Results

- Gulf bilingual website finished
- NOM proposal for shrimp aquaculture, including a best practices manual, presented to federal authorities.

- Advocacy activities for the release and acceptance of the NOM for aquaculture.
- Bilingual website (including 6 different templates) of the watchdog surveillance program finished and implemented.

LOOKING AHEAD

Challenges/Constraints/Observations

A future challenge within the watchdog surveillance program is the involvement of PROFEPA authorities, given that they are the governmental agency responsible for environmental regulations. Their commitment, along with the participation of key regional groups to monitor the system, is necessary for the successful establishment of a well coordinated mechanism to monitor healthy environmental development.

Proposed Strategies

A strong communication campaign was developed during the last few months not only to promote the startup and objectives of the watchdog surveillance program, but also to develop awareness among the general public and government of the initial development of the Nautical Route. This information will give the various stakeholders the ability to interpret accurately the Impact Evaluation, its implications, and the viability of the project.



COSTA MAYA

LESSONS LEARNED

- There is a misperception about the relationship between conservationist NGOs, SEMARNAT, and other stakeholders in both the Gulf and the Mesoamerican Reef. Most of the local communities

and government agencies do not understand each others roles in the development and implementation of sustainable strategies for the use of natural resources.

- The industrial shrimp fishery of the Gulf of California region will continue to obstruct the OET process, even if they are part of the discussions.
- An intensive communications campaign is necessary to raise the profile of the OET process in both ecoregions.
- Although it is a traditional perception among some state governments and regional groups that conservationist NGOs restrain the economic development, it is a fact that the results obtained from the awareness and communication campaigns conducted in recent years have created an important critical mass in the private sector that is aware of the importance of conserving the regions natural richness.
- Today, when socioeconomic development is in the mind of all Mexican political parties, most environmental organizations are being perceived by certain (and powerful) sectors of society as being more concerned about the environment than the people's well being and economic growth. Nevertheless, Mexico is in the midst of a political change, which offers a unique opportunity to build new bridges and implement innovative approaches for the rational use of natural resources along with economic growth in order to meet the present and future needs and challenges to improve the quality of life of a growing national population.

Advance Geographical Information Systems and Capacity Development for GIS.

Design of the GIS systems for the watchdog surveillance program in the Gulf of California Project.

The WWF Mesoamerican Reef does not have a GIS developed, but local NGOs such as Amigos de Sian Ka'an already have a GIS that is used to achieve the objectives of the project.

Participation in International Conferences.

None

Program Coordination and Collaboration.

This report reflects the work done by WWF Mexico and its consultants during the life of the project entitled "STRENGTHENING POLICY TOOLS TO ACHIEVE INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT". As is important for every project related to environmental policy, this project included direct WWF action and collaboration with partners including the Coalition for the Sustainability of the Gulf of California (CSGC), Conservation International (CI), the Network of Universities of Mexico's Northwest (UAS, UNISON, UABC and UABCS) and of the Mesoamerican Reef, Amigos de Sian Ka'an, (ASK), the staff of the Coastal Protected Areas, and the Mexican Association of Adventure Tourism (AMTAVE).